

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE SENATE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
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COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 10, 2005**

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Chairman Warner, Senator Levin, distinguished members of the Committee; it is my honor to report to you on the state of readiness of your Marine Corps. Today, we are at war and your Marines are performing well because of the support they have received from the Congress and their extraordinary courage, dedication, and commitment. Marines realize the danger to the Nation, their vital role, and the magnitude of their responsibilities. Many have been wounded or killed in action over the past year carrying out these responsibilities.

Marines continue to demonstrate that we are an expeditionary force in readiness – *Most Ready When the Nation is Least Ready*. Your continued support has made this possible. The Global War on Terror will be long; therefore, sustaining and improving our readiness for future challenges is critical to ensuring that the Marine Corps continues to provide the combatant commanders the critical capabilities needed. On behalf of all Marines and their families, I thank this Committee for your sustained and indispensable support during these challenging times.

I. INTRODUCTION AND THE VALUE OF READINESS

Currently, your Marines are fully engaged across the spectrum of military capabilities in prosecuting the Global War on Terror. Since the watershed events of September 11, 2001, the core competencies, capabilities, and emphasis on readiness that the Marine Corps has structured itself around over many years have repeatedly proven their value in the numerous and varied operations this conflict demands. The importance of our Nation's ability to project power and conduct military operations over long distances for extended periods of time as part of a joint force has been revalidated. The Marine Corps' role as the Nation's premier expeditionary force-in-readiness, combined with our forward deployed posture, has enabled us to rapidly and effectively contribute to these joint operations. Our scalable, combined arms teams, seamlessly integrating our robust ground and aviation forces with adaptive logistics, create speed, flexibility, and agility to effectively respond to each unique emerging situation. The high state of training and quality of our Marines along with our warrior ethos – highlighted by our creed that every Marine is a rifleman – allows Marines to thrive in the chaotic, unstable, and unpredictable environment that has always characterized warfare and that our very adaptable enemies methodically attempt to exploit.

Previously I have highlighted to Congress that in the early phases of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, two forward-deployed Marine Expeditionary Units formed Task Force

58 and projected the first major conventional combat units into Afghanistan – more that 350 miles from its sea base of amphibious shipping. Operation IRAQ FREEDOM I witnessed the flexibility of our projection capabilities when a combat ready Marine Expeditionary Force of over 70,000 Marines and Sailors was deployed in less than 60 days by multiple means – forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Units, amphibious shipping embarked from stateside bases, Maritime Prepositioned Ships, the use of amphibious ships as sea-based aviation power projection platforms, as well as strategic air and sealift assets. The significant capabilities of this combined arms force – as it attacked more than 500 miles from its off-load areas in Kuwait, rendering ten Iraqi divisions combat ineffective, and seizing half of Baghdad as well as key areas to the north – were also demonstrated.

During this past year, Marines have continued to demonstrate their readiness across the spectrum of required missions. Shortly after their return from Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the Marine Corps received a short-notice tasking to deploy 25,000 Marines back to Iraq. Since March 2004, Marines have led the Multi-National-Force-West, responsible for stability and security in the Al Anbar Province in Iraq. Our expeditious and innovative pre-deployment combat skills training program, rapid modifications of our training and equipment to meet an evolving threat, and our emphasis on cultural and language capabilities properly prepared us for the challenges in this complex region. The I Marine Expeditionary Force, reinforced by three Marine Expeditionary Units, is currently executing multiple security, urban combat, nation building, counter-insurgency, aviation command and control, and force protection missions with great confidence and skill, in the face of an adaptable and dangerous enemy.

In Afghanistan this past spring, in addition to the infantry battalion and helicopter support already supporting Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, we provided, on short-notice, a regimental headquarters and a combined arms Marine Expeditionary Unit. This Marine force was a major element of the combined joint task force assigned to counter a suspected Taliban “Spring Offensive.” The success of this force greatly assisted in setting the conditions for the Afghan national elections later in the year and in establishment of a secure and stable government. We continue to provide both ground and aviation forces – currently an infantry battalion, elements of two helicopter squadrons, and training teams – to protect and foster this new democracy.

In addition to these operations, our concurrent support to other regions including the Horn of Africa, the Pacific, support to the evacuation of non-combatants from Liberia, and the unexpected peace operation in Haiti has demonstrated our great range of flexibility. As on numerous previous occasions, Marines are deeply involved in humanitarian efforts in the wake of the Sumatran earthquake and Indian Ocean tsunami. The value of our readiness across the spectrum of military capability; our forward presence and security cooperation efforts in this region for years; and our significant planning, logistical and transportation capabilities from our robust sea-base platforms have again proven critical in the effective projection of America's power – this time our power of humanitarian assistance. We should not underestimate the importance of this humanitarian operation on the stability of this critical region nor its potential favorable impact on the Global War on Terror.

Currently, we are conducting a major rotation of our units and headquarters in Iraq. Many of these units have previously deployed to this theater, but we continue to aggressively match our training and equipment to the changing threat. We expect our commitment to Iraq to remain at about 23,000 Marines and Sailors, with the Marine Corps reserve forces providing about 3,000 of these personnel into 2006.

Your support has ensured our near-term readiness remains strong. We will need your continued support in order to retain this readiness into the future. The current demand on the force is high. The entire Marine Corps is supporting the Global War on Terror, and no forces have been fenced. In the past two years, we have gone from a deployment rotation of one -to-three (6 months out / 18 months back) to our current one-to-one ratio (7 months out / 7 months back) for our infantry battalions, aviation squadrons, and other, high demand capabilities. This means that Marine units in the operating forces are either deployed or are training to relieve deployed units. Since 9-11, we have activated in excess of 95 percent of our Selected Marine Corps Reserve units. The vast majority have served in either Iraq or Afghanistan. Despite this high operational tempo, the Marine Corps continues to meet its recruiting and retention goals in quantity and quality, but the effort required by individual recruiters and career retention specialists is significant. The Marine Corps greatly appreciates Congress' authorization to increase our end-strength by 3,000 Marines in the Fiscal Year 2005 Authorization Act. These additional Marines will assist in reducing demands on Marines by filling our battalions to their

designed strengths. We are currently assessing whether a further increase of personnel beyond 178,000 will be required to meet long-term commitments in the Global War on Terror.

Last year, we completed a force structure review to determine how we could better meet the operational needs of the Global War on Terror within our then approved end strength of 175,000. This effort, addressed in detail in the Personnel Readiness section below, will result in the creation of additional high demand units and capabilities to address pressures within the force.

The significant increase in wear and tear on materiel – in addition to combat losses – is a considerable monetary challenge that we identified in our Fiscal Year 2005 Supplemental submission. This submission also includes our request for essential warfighting and force protection equipment. These funds are critical to our sustained readiness.

Operations over these past few years have dramatically highlighted that our focus on readiness to fight across the spectrum of conflict is on the mark. Your continued support to fully fund our modernization and transformation accounts will ensure that Marine forces will be able to respond to the joint force commanders' requirements.

II. PERSONNEL READINESS

The Marine Corps continues to answer the call because of our individual Marines and the support they receive from their families and from the Nation. Morale and commitment are high. Marines join the Corps to “fight and win battles” and we are certainly giving them the opportunity to do that. We are an expeditionary force accustomed to deployments, but never at such a high tempo.

Marines

End Strength. The Marine Corps greatly appreciates the congressional end strength increase to 178,000. Our first priority for this increase is to enhance the manning of our infantry units. We will also create dedicated foreign military training units and add to our recruiting force, our trainers, and other support for the operating forces. Coupled with initiatives implemented as part of the recent force structure review and our military to civilian conversions, we will place many more Marines in our operating forces to reduce the tempo of operations on Marines and their families.

Force Structure Review. The Marine Corps – recognizing the need to continue transformation and the rebalancing of forces to meet the needs of the 21st century and the long-term Global War on Terror – completed a review of our total force structure, active and reserve, last year. We are implementing the recommended force structure initiatives with the majority achieving initial operational capability in Fiscal Year 2006 and full operational capability by Fiscal Year 2008. These initiatives are end strength and structure neutral – offsets to balance these increases in capabilities are internal to the Marine Corps and come from military to civilian conversions and the disestablishment and reorganization of less critical capabilities. Implementation of these initiatives will require additional equipment, facilities, and operations and maintenance resources. The Marine Corps will continue to evaluate our force structure to ensure that it provides the needed capabilities in a timely manner to support our national security requirements.

Major structure changes in the active component include the establishment of two additional infantry battalions, three light armored reconnaissance companies, three reconnaissance companies, two force reconnaissance platoons, and an additional Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO). We will also augment our existing explosive ordnance disposal, intelligence, aviation support, civil affairs, command and control, and psychological operations assets.

In the reserve component these structure initiatives will increase the capability of Marine Forces Reserve Command to better respond to the Global War on Terror. We will establish an intelligence support battalion, a security/anti-terrorism battalion, and two additional light armored reconnaissance companies. We will also augment existing capabilities in the areas of civil affairs and command and control, and we are restructuring some reserve units to convert them into Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) Detachments – allowing more timely access to these Marine reservists to support contingency operations.

Military to Civilian Conversions. The Marine Corps continues to pursue sensible military to civilian conversions in order to increase the number of Marines in the operating force. In Fiscal Year 2004, the Marine Corps converted 664 billets. We plan to continue our program for conversions, and we are on course to achieve 2,397 conversions through September 2006.

Retention. The primary concern with increased personnel and operational tempo is its long-term impact on the career force, especially the officers and the staff non-commissioned

officers who have between 8 and 12 years of service. The end-strength increase, implementation of our force structure initiatives, and Military-Civilian conversions are expected to partially mitigate the negative effects of this high tempo on the individual Marine and the force. Strong retention is a complex function of leadership opportunities, sense of purpose, compensation, quality of life, and educational opportunities.

Enlisted Retention. We are a young force. Maintaining a continuous flow of quality new accessions is of fundamental importance to well-balanced readiness. Over 26,000 of our active duty enlisted Marines are still teenagers, and 104,000 are serving on their first enlistment. In Fiscal Year 2004, the Marine Corps achieved 100 percent of our goals for both first term and career (second reenlistment and beyond) active duty reenlistments. Selected Reserve enlisted retention for Fiscal Year 2004 was slightly above our historical norm. In Fiscal Year 2005, we are again off to a strong start in all categories. We will continue to monitor this area closely. Although the Selective Reenlistment Bonus represents just one-half of one percent of our military personnel budget, it remains a powerful retention tool, and we take pride in our prudent stewardship of this resource. This year it will play an even more important role in retaining our best Marines as we maintain an end strength of 178,000. These reenlisted Noncommissioned and Staff Noncommissioned Officers will form the core of our new units.

Officer Retention. Overall, we continue to achieve our goals for officer retention. We are retaining experienced and high quality officers. Our aggregate officer retention rate was 91.0 percent for Fiscal Year 2004, at our historical average. Reserve officer retention of 75 percent is slightly below the historical norm of 77 percent. It is important to note that high retention in the active component reduces the number of officers transitioning (accessions) into the Selected Marine Corps Reserve.

Recruiting. A successful retention effort is but one part of ensuring there is a properly trained Marine in the right place at the right time. Successful recruiting is essential to replenishing the force and maintaining a high state of readiness. In Fiscal Year 2004, the Marine Corps recruited 100 percent of its active component goal of 30,608 Marines, with 97.7 percent being Tier I High School graduates. The Marine Corps Reserve also achieved 100 percent of its recruiting goals with the accession of 6,165 Non-Prior Service Marines and 2,083 prior-service Marines. Officer accessions, in both the active and reserve components, achieved their goals, but reserve officer numbers remain challenging because our primary accession source is officers

leaving active duty. We are currently exploring new options in this area and believe that the authority for a Selected Reserve Officer Affiliation Bonus in the Fiscal Year 2005 National Defense Authorization Act may contribute significantly to these efforts. For Fiscal Year 2005, both active and reserve recruiting are challenging, but we are currently on track to meet our goals.

We believe the recruiting and retention “marketplace” is going to become more challenging. Your continued support for a strong reenlistment bonus and advertising programs will be essential to meet this challenge.

Marine Corps Reserve. The morale and patriotic spirit of the Marine Reserves, their families, and their employers remains extraordinarily high. As demonstrated over this past year, the Marine Corps Reserve continues to be fully ready and capable of rapid activation and deployment to augment and reinforce the active component of the Marine Corps as required. This capability has helped us to avoid untimely deployment extensions, maximize force management of our reserves, maintain unit integrity, sustain the reserve force, and lessen the burden on Marines and their families. To date almost 30,000 Reserve Marines have served on active duty in the Global War On Terror. Currently, over 13,000 reserve Marines are on active duty with over 11,500 in cohesive reserve ground, aviation and combat support units and almost 1,600 serving as individual augments in both Marine and Joint commands. As of January 2005, the Marine Corps Reserve began activating 3,000 Selected Marine Corps Reserve Marines in support of operations in Iraq and 500 for Afghanistan.

Despite the high tempo of operations, the Marine Corps Reserve continues to meet its goals for recruiting and retaining quality men and women willing to manage commitments to their families, their communities, their civilian careers, and the Corps. The Marine Corps is closely monitoring post-mobilization retention in order to assess any potential long-term negative impact from recent activations. As we build on the lessons of the recent past and begin to implement adjustments to the structure of our reserve forces, we will ensure that these changes are made with full recognition that the Marine Corps Reserve is a community-based force.

Marine For Life. Initiated in Fiscal Year 2002, the Marine For Life program continues to provide support for 27,000 Marines transitioning from active service back to civilian life each year. Built on the philosophy, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine," Reserve Marines in over 80 cities help transitioning Marines and their families to get settled in their new communities.

Sponsorship includes assistance with employment, education, housing, childcare, veterans' benefits, and other support services needed to make a smooth transition. To provide this support, the Marine For Life program taps into a network of former Marines and Marine-friendly businesses, organizations, and individuals willing to lend a hand to a Marine who has served honorably. Approximately 2,000 Marines are logging onto the web-based electronic network for assistance each month. Assistance from career retention specialists and transitional recruiters helps transitioning Marines tremendously by getting the word out about the program.

Marine For Life – Injured Support. Leveraging the organizational network and strengths of the Marine for Life program, we are currently implementing an Injured Support program to assist injured Marines, Sailors serving with Marines, and their families. The goal is to bridge the gap between military medical care and the Department of Veterans Affairs – providing continuity of support through transition and assistance for several years afterwards. Planned features of the program include: advocacy for Marines, Sailors and their families within the Marine Corps and with external agencies; pre and post-Service separation case management; assistance in working with physical evaluation boards; an interactive web site for disability/benefit information; an enhanced Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) “One Source” capability for 24/7/365 information; facilitation assistance with federal hiring preferences; coordination with veterans, public, and private organizations providing support to our seriously injured; improved Department of Veterans Affairs handling of Marine cases; and development of any required proposals for legislative changes to better support our Marines and Sailors. This program began limited operations in early January 2005.

Civilian Marines

Marine Corps Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan. Marines, more than ever before, recognize the importance of our civilian teammates and the invaluable service they provide to our Corps as an integral component of the Total Force. To that end we continue to mature and execute our Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan, a strategic road map to achieve a civilian workforce capable of meeting the challenges of the future. We are committed to building leadership skills at all levels, providing interesting and challenging training and career opportunities, and improving the quality of work life for all appropriated and non-appropriated Civilian Marines. As part of our effort to meet our goal of accessing and retaining a select group

of civilians imbued with our Core Values, we have developed a program to provide our Civilian Marines an opportunity to learn about the Marine Corps' ethos, history, and Core Values – to properly acculturate them to this special institution. All this supports our value proposition, why a civilian chooses to pursue a job with the Marine Corps: to “Support Our Marines. Be Part of the Team.”

National Security Personnel System. The Marine Corps is actively participating with the Department of Defense in the development and implementation of the new personnel system. Following an intensive training program for supervisors, managers, human resources specialists, employees, commanders and senior management, we will join with the Department in the first phase of implementation, tentatively scheduled for July of 2005. In the Marine Corps, we will lead from the top and have our Headquarters Marine Corps civilian personnel included in the first phase of implementation, known as ‘Spiral One.’

Information Technology. We remain committed to transforming our manpower processes by leveraging the unique capabilities resident in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS), our fully integrated personnel, pay, and manpower system that serves active, reserve and retired members. The integrated nature of MCTFS allows us to develop our Total Force Administration System (TFAS); a web based and virtually paperless administration system that provides Marines and commanders 24-hour access to administrative processes via Marine OnLine. Our TFAS allows administrative personnel to refocus their efforts from routine tasks to more complex analytical duties, and ultimately will enable greater efficiencies. Additionally, MCTFS facilitates our single source of manpower data, directly feeding our Operational Data Store Enterprise and Total Force Data Warehouse. This distinctive capability allows us to accurately forecast manpower trends and fuels our Manpower Performance Indicators, which provide near real time graphical representation of the Corps' manpower status such as our deployment tempo. Properly managing our manpower requirements and processes requires continued investment in modern technologies and we are committed to these prudent investments.

Quality of Life

Marine Corps Community Services. Taking care of Marines and their families is essential to the operational readiness of the Corps. The relevance of this mission is particularly

evident when leaders at all levels assess preparedness of their command and unit functioning before, during, and after forward deployments. As an expeditionary force we are accustomed to frequent deployments, yet the current environment contains elements of personal danger and family risk that must be addressed with appropriate and timely support. To date in Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM, we have been careful to closely monitor our programs and adjust support to ensure our Marines and their families receive the necessary care to sustain them throughout the deployment cycle. In this regard, our Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) organizations' combined structure of Family Services, Morale, Welfare and Recreation Programs, Voluntary Off Duty Education, and Exchange operations has positioned us to efficiently and effectively leverage and direct community services assets to help Marines and their families meet the challenges associated with our lifestyle and current operational tempo.

Deployment Support. During pre-deployment, Marines and families attend to wills, powers of attorney, and family care plans; and spouses establish a vital connection through the commander's Key Volunteer Network that is organized to provide accurate and timely information on the status of the deployment. We have developed a series of pre-deployment, in-theater, return and reunion, and post deployment awareness and support services to mitigate problems created by traumatic combat experiences and their associated stress. We fully understand that Marines and their families are not immune from social risks such as suicide, domestic violence, or sexual assault. We also understand that risk factors can be exacerbated by the current operational tempo, and we have a variety of proactive counseling services to address individual and unit readiness concerns. Examples include: Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Program designed to address the symptoms and risks of untreated combat stress, its signs, and the resources available for treatment; and our Operational Stress Control and Readiness Program (OSCAR), which embeds mental health professionals at Battalion Aid Stations and has resulted in a marked decrease in medical evacuations for mental health reasons. Prior to departing a combat zone, we also plan for a decompression period in which military chaplains provide a Warrior Transition Brief focused on better preparing our Marines to reintegrate with family and society. We offer similar return and reunion programs for families awaiting the homecoming of a deployed Marine. A wide array of services is available at our installations through chaplains, medical treatment facilities, and MCCS to support the Marine and family members in the post deployment phase. For those Marines and families in need who are residing a distance from our

installations, face-to-face counseling services are available through MCCS One Source. MCCS One Source offers 24/7/365 information and referral services via toll-free telephone and Internet access. MCCS One Source has also proven to be an especially valuable resource to assist Reserve Marines and their families who often experience special challenges when trying to acclimate to requirements, procedures, and support associated with various military programs and benefits.

We recognize that family readiness is integral to unit readiness. To help our families through the separation and stress of deployment, respite and extended childcare services have been made possible by Congress in supplemental appropriations. Information and referral services are offered via different access points such as unit/command websites, hotlines and MCCS One Source. While forward deployed, Marines have access to tactical field exchanges; a variety of fitness, recreation, and leisure facilities; and telecommunication services. We are utilizing our postal Marines to expedite mail delivery. We also conducted a successful voter awareness campaign that ensured our Marines had the opportunity to exercise their right and civic responsibility to vote, even from austere, forward deployed locations.

Casualty Assistance. The Marine Corps, and most importantly Marine families, appreciate recent legislative actions, including the expanded authorizations for parents of our deceased to attend funerals when they are not the primary next-of-kin, and also the enhanced travel to bedside benefits that are so important to the morale of those Marines subject to extended hospital stays. We have built internal support services, including an extensive network of Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs) throughout the country who serve as the primary point of contact for the families of deceased and severely injured Marines regarding all military benefits, entitlements, or offers from benevolent organizations. CACO support is managed through our Headquarters Casualty Affairs section and has been enhanced by the development and implementation of an Office of the Secretary of Defense-funded Injured/Ill Patient Tracking website in March of 2004. Commanders at all levels now have visibility of their Marines at all stages in the medical and convalescence process.

I would like to thank Congress for your continued support of the programs and services so critical to the readiness of our Corps, to include provisions of supplemental appropriations; all of which directly contribute to quality of life enhancements. Also, your kind and caring visits with our wounded Marines, Sailors, and their families are greatly appreciated.

III. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The Marine Corps' Training and Education Command continues to incorporate lessons learned from the Global War on Terror, ensuring that Marines are fully trained and prepared to meet the challenges of the demanding operational environments in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world. In many respects, the hard won lessons from these most recent battlefields have served to validate our training policies and programs. The training at the recruit depots continues to deliver basic trained Marines, imbued with the core values and warrior ethos necessary to ensure their rapid integration into operational units. In particular, our fundamental tenet, "Every Marine a Rifleman," has proven its worth time and again. Marines in almost every occupational field have executed the tasks of provisional riflemen, from establishing security to patrolling their areas of responsibility. In a conflict where nearly every convoy is a combat patrol, the fact that all Marines are taught basic combat and infantry skills at the Schools of Infantry has helped ensure their survival and mission accomplishment in an environment where traditional lines between the front and the rear are virtually indistinct.

Adapting to a Thinking Foe. Where needed, we have adjusted the curricula at formal schools to ensure that Marines are trained using the latest lessons learned. Our enemies are constantly adapting, and we must ensure that our training reflects the modifications to tactics, techniques, and procedures that are necessary to counter these changes. Our schools maintain close communication with the operating forces through the review of after-action reports, lessons-learned data, surveys, and personal interviews with returning Marines. For example, classes in Improvised Explosive Device awareness, reaction to vehicle ambush, and combat leadership discussions with returning combat veterans have been integrated into appropriate programs of instruction. In addition, new infantry lieutenants receive enhanced training in urban patrolling, and their 96-hour final field exercise encompasses both conventional operations and stability and support operations. Military Occupational Specialty schools are also adjusting their curricula to ensure that we adapt our focus from fighting a conventional force to dealing with the challenges posed by irregular forces. For example, at our intelligence schools, counter-insurgency training has been added to the curriculum, illustrating changes in the collection procedures necessary for greater effectiveness in an insurgency environment. We are weaving cultural training throughout the training continuum to reinforce the understanding of the

operational importance of culture and to help Marines more effectively interact with civilian populations.

Focused Pre-Deployment Training. To focus training efforts, all deploying Marine units rotate through a standardized training package. Building on home station training in basic urban skills, ground units deploy to the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Center at Twentynine Palms, California, for in-depth training in convoy operations, fire support, and small-unit coordinated assaults against defended positions. Following that, the units move to March Air Reserve Base at Riverside, California, for a graduate-level training exercise in urban operations, including stability and support operations. In addition, ground units scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan train at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center at Bridgeport, California. Here they focus on gaining the skills necessary to operate in demanding high-altitude environments like they will experience in Afghanistan. Marine Corps aviation units participate in a standardized training package, Desert Talon, in Yuma, Arizona. All of these training events are solidly grounded on lessons learned from the operating forces.

Initiatives for Future Challenges. While we adjust to the current operational environment, we also keep our eye on the future. We are currently undertaking initiatives that will further strengthen the training and education that Marines receive in years to come. One key initiative is the development of Military Occupational Specialty Roadmaps to help individual Marines and leaders map out career paths. Complementing this effort, we are conducting a complete reevaluation of our entire professional military education program to ensure that it seamlessly reinforces our Military Occupational Specialty training as well as ensuring, at the appropriate levels, a strong bond with joint professional military education. In the joint arena, we are also heavily engaged in supporting the Department of Defense efforts to create a flexible and dynamic Joint National Training Capability. In this respect, and thanks to the generous support of Congress, we are making large infrastructure investments at our Combat Training Center at Twentynine Palms, California. We are in the process of building a number of urban warfare training facilities on this base that will allow us to conduct battalion and company-sized urban warfare training, further enhancing the combat ability of Marine units. All these efforts will ensure the continued ability of the Marine Corps to respond whenever and wherever the Nation calls.

IV. EQUIPMENT AND MATERIEL READINESS

Our readiness priority is the support and sustainment of our forward deployed forces. Currently, the Marine Corps has 26 percent of our active operating forces deployed in support of the Global War on Terror utilizing 30 percent of our ground equipment and 25 percent of our aviation assets.

Demand on Equipment. The Global War on Terror equipment usage rates average 8:1 over normal peacetime usage due to continuous combat operations. This high usage rate in a harsh operating environment, coupled with the added weight of armor and unavoidable delays of scheduled maintenance due to combat, is degrading our equipment at an accelerated rate. More than 1,800 principal end items valued at \$94.3 million have been destroyed. Repairs on 2300 damaged end items will require additional depot maintenance.

Readiness Rates. The equipment readiness (mission capable) rates of our deployed forces average 95 percent for ground equipment and 72 percent for aviation units. Our prepositioned stocks, within both the Marine Corps Preposition Program – Norway and Maritime Prepositioned Shipping – have ensured the sustained readiness of our deployed ground units. In order to improve our readiness rate in theater, we are creating a limited aircraft depot maintenance capability, coordinating with the Army to leverage their ground depot maintenance capability, and establishing a pool of ground equipment to expedite the replacement of damaged major end items. The corresponding equipment readiness (mission capable) rates for units remaining in garrison are 81 percent for ground equipment and 69 percent for aviation units. We currently are rebalancing the ground equipment assets of our non-deployed units to maximize equipment availability for unit training. We anticipate a reduction in the size of our force deployed to Iraq in the Operation IRAQI FREEDOM 04-06 rotation and plan to return the associated equipment to the non-deployed operating forces. We will need your continued support in order to recapitalize and reconstitute our prepositioned stocks.

Meeting Urgent Operational Requirements. A critical factor for both Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM in ensuring our Marines were as adequately equipped as possible is the Urgent Universal Needs Statement (UUNS) process that we initiated in 2002. This process has provided a way for the leaders and members of our operating forces to identify and forward new requirements for weapons and gear up the chain of command for quick review and approval –most in under 90 days. Upon approval by the Marine Corps Requirements

Oversight Council, the Marine Corps and the Department of the Navy have realigned funds as necessary within permitted reprogramming thresholds. When required by reprogramming authority rules, we have forwarded requests that exceed the established reprogramming thresholds to the Congress for approval. The sources for these reprogramming actions have been our investment account assets. In many cases, the funding was made available by our decision to accept risk and defer the full execution of otherwise approved programs in order to address immediate warfighting needs. Through this process we have acquired more than 200,000 pieces of essential warfighting equipment that have been provided to the operational commanders.

Some examples are:

- Vehicle hardening:
 - Purchased factory produced and field expedient armor for nearly 4,000 vehicles
 - Fielded 37 export model M1114 up-armored High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV)
 - Will procure and field 498 M1114s up-armored HMMWVs
 - Producing the Marine Armor Kit (MAK) for HMMWVs and the Marine Armor System (MAS) for the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (installation for both systems will be operationally driven and is planned to begin between Feb and May 05).
- Numerous types of weapons sights
 - Advanced Combat Optic Gunsights (ACOG)
 - Thermal Weapons Sights
- Family of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) equipment including unmanned robotics and blast suits
- Counter Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Jammers
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) – Dragon Eye and Scan Eagle
- Hardened Engineer Vehicles – Cougar and Buffalo systems being acquired from the U.S. Army
- Radios: Personal Role Radios, PRC-148, PRC-117F, and Tropo Satellite Support Radios
- Unit Operations Centers
- Night Vision Devices
- Dust abatement chemicals and sprayer systems

- Individual body armor
- Backscatter X-Ray machines
- Blue Force Tracker

The Marine Corps, with superb assistance from the Department of the Navy, realigned funds and received supplemental funding to fund these acquisitions. The impact of the reprogramming was deferred deliveries or delays in the execution of other approved procurement programs. Affected Marine Corps programs include personal gear and weaponry, vehicles, command and control systems, communications, and tactical computers at a cost to the Marine Corps of over \$300 million. Similarly, Marine Corps initiatives within the Navy budget affected by reprogramming included ships, naval weapons systems and aircraft replacements/modifications that Marines man or that directly support us. The funding required to buy back some of these critical capabilities is included in the Fiscal Year 2005 supplemental request.

Replacements and Depot Maintenance. Our equipment replacement strategies support our long-term commitment and considerations for new item modernization or transformation opportunities whenever possible. Use of the Marine Corps depot maintenance capability has been optimized using our organic depots, other service depots, and commercial sources – in that order. For our depots, we have requested \$319 million in Fiscal Year 2005, which includes the baseline programmed appropriation of \$114 million, an approved Congressional increase of \$43 million, and our request for an additional \$162 million in supplemental funding.

V. FUTURE READINESS

While the primary focus of the Marine Corps is supporting the Global War on Terror, we also have a responsibility to prepare for future conflicts and contingencies. Our continued transformation recognizes that an array of non-traditional threats will increasingly influence our development of tomorrow's Corps. Our challenge is to determine the right balance of capabilities that the Marine Corps must provide to the Nation in order to help defeat a broad range of adversaries. The review of our force structure, referred to earlier, is an example of how we are adapting to better prosecute the Global War on Terror and meet future national security requirements.

Logistics Modernization. Logistics Modernization is the most comprehensive approach ever to improving tactical and operational level logistics. It is a Marine Corps-wide, multi-year,

people-focused program designed to improve processes and technology supporting Marine Air Ground Task Force operations. Logistics Modernization consists of seven initiatives that - when fully implemented - will; modernize our *people* through logistics chain-oriented education and effective change management and communications; will modernize *processes* through moving to a logistics chain management approach that integrates supply, maintenance and distribution; and will modernize *technology* through acquisition and fielding of Global Combat Support System Marine Corps (GCSS-MC). Logistics Modernization initiatives will address Operation Iraqi Freedom lessons through their laser focus on the deployed environment and the last tactical mile and increase Marine Air Ground Task Force lethality by providing increased accuracy, reliability, and responsiveness of logistics information to Marines deployed on the battlefield.

Power Projection and Sustainable Forcible Entry Capability. Whatever the future brings, we believe that the Nation will continue to require the capability to project and sustain joint power from the sea, despite adversaries' attempts to deny us access. The Navy-Marine Corps team – with the immediate capabilities of our forward deployed forces, the rapid deployment of medium weight forces, and the full spectrum capability for major combat operations – provides our joint force commanders with flexible options to meet a wide range of potential circumstances. As we look into the future, the requirements for naval forces to maintain presence, engage allies and potential coalition partners, build understanding and operational relationships for the future, relentlessly pursue terrorist organizations, and project sustainable forces ashore for a wide variety of operations will only increase. We must continue to improve our ability to use the sea and our maritime superiority in order to gain access, to reinforce and defend allies, aid victims of catastrophic disaster, or defeat aggressors.

As an element of our joint power projection capability, forcible entry is a core competency that the Navy-Marine Corps team provides to joint force commanders. Our ability to use the sea as maneuver space, to provide us with overwhelming strategic mobility, and to protect us from the majority of challengers must remain one of our asymmetric advantages. It ensures that any adversary must devote considerable resources and time in attempting to deal with our unique ability to hold the length and depth of his coastline at risk, while he considers his military – even political – options. As we increase our investment in non-traditional capabilities, we will continue to transform the means by which the Nation projects offensive, defensive, sustainment, and command and control capabilities from the freedom of the high seas.

Amphibious and Maritime Preposition Force Capability. To this end, amphibious and maritime prepositioned force capabilities remain the critical factors necessary to fully realize this essential warfighting capability for the Nation. Naval forces must maintain the ability to rapidly close, effectively employ, and sustain a persistent military force from the sea, thereby willfully projecting power ashore. The Marine Corps warfighting requirement for forcible entry amphibious shipping remains the ability to lift the assault echelon of three Marine Expeditionary Brigades, fiscally constrained to 2.5. In addition, our proven maritime prepositioned ships – capable of supporting the rapid deployment of three Marine Expeditionary Brigades are an important complement to our amphibious capability. Combined, these capabilities enable the Marine Corps to rapidly react to a crisis in a number of potential theaters and the flexibility to employ forces across the battlespace.

Seabasing Concept. Seabasing is our overarching operating concept for using the sea as maneuver space. This transformational concept breaks down the traditional sea-land barrier. It will enable us to project naval, joint, and combined forces anywhere in the world. Recognized as a key future joint military capability, Seabasing assures joint access by leveraging the operational maneuver of forces on the sea and by reducing dependence upon fixed and vulnerable land bases. This concept will provide our Combatant Commanders with unprecedented versatility in operations spanning from cooperative security to major combat. A Department of the Navy requirements study planned for this year will identify the necessary naval capabilities and requirements for Seabasing – particularly with regard to amphibious and pre-positioned shipping, connectors, fires, and other necessary support. We are also leading the development of a Seabasing Joint Integrating Concept to better consider opportunities and options for each of the Services to exploit our command of the sea.

Programs. The following is a summary of programs to achieve these concepts, requirements and capabilities:

Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) (MPF(F)). The MPF(F) will be a key enabler for sea-based operations. It will allow us to better exploit the sea as maneuver space to conduct joint operations at a time and place of our choosing. MPF (F) will enable four new capabilities: (1) at-sea arrival and assembly (2) direct support of the assault echelon of the amphibious task force; (3) long-term, sea-based sustainment; and (4) at-sea reconstitution and redeployment.

These capabilities will be invaluable in supporting forward engagement, presence, and relationship building operations with allies and potential coalition partners by our forward deployed forces as well as through support to disaster relief and humanitarian operations. During the combat phases of a joint campaign, these platforms as element of the seabase will deliver and support the rapid reinforcement by a single Marine Expeditionary Brigade as well as key support to the Marine Expedition Force and elements of the joint force from the sea. Additionally, these flexible assets can remain in support of post-conflict activities and forces from a relatively secure location at sea. The specific ship mix and number of Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) ships are yet to be determined, but the final mix will be capable of prepositioning critical equipment and 20 days of supplies for our future Marine Expeditionary Brigades in each Maritime Prepositioning Squadron.

Landing Platform Dock (LPD). The LPD 17 San Antonio class of amphibious ships represents the Department of the Navy's commitment to a modern expeditionary power projection fleet. The lead ship was successfully launched in July 2003 and production efforts are focused on meeting test milestones for a summer 2005 delivery. The LPD 17 class replaces four classes of older ships—the LKA, LST, LSD 36, and the LPD 4 – and is being built with a 40-year expected service life. The LPD 17 class ships will play a key role in supporting the ongoing Global War on Terror by forward deploying Marines and their equipment to rapidly respond to crises abroad. Its unique design will facilitate expanded force coverage and decreased reaction times of forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Units. In forcible entry operations, the LPD 17 will help maintain a robust surface assault and rapid off-load capability for the Marine Air Ground Task Force far into the future.

Landing Helicopter Assault (Replacement) (LHA (R)). Our Tarawa-class amphibious assault ships reach the end of their service life during the next decade (2011-2015). An eighth Wasp-class amphibious assault ship is under construction and will replace one Tarawa-class ship during Fiscal Year 2007. In order to meet future warfighting requirements and fully capitalize on the Navy's investment in aviation, ships with enhanced aviation capabilities will replace the remaining LHAs. The LHA (R) will support requirements in the larger context of Joint Seabasing, power projection, and the Global War On Terror. The first ship, LHA(R) Flight Zero, is a transitional ship to the succeeding ships in the class that will be transformational in capability and design – interoperable with future sea-basing ships and platforms that will better

support and take advantage of our investment in the MV-22 and Joint Strike Fighter. This lead ship is currently in the capabilities development stage of the acquisition process with advanced procurement funds provided in the Fiscal Year 2005 budget.

High Speed Connectors. The Joint High Speed Vessel will address Combatant Commanders' requirements for a forward deployed rapid force closure capability. Army, Marine Corps and Navy programs were recently merged into a Navy-led program office with an acquisition strategy intended to leverage current commercial fast ferry technology. We are pursuing an aggressive research and development effort to enhance our capability to conduct ship-to-ship transfers of personnel and equipment. Capitalizing on lessons learned in recent operations, United States European Command's Exercise AFRICAN LION 05 is being planned to explore the capability of high speed connectors to facilitate reception, staging, onward movement and integration of forces. To meet the Combatant Commanders' high-speed intra theater lift requirements, we are investigating ways to continue leases of foreign-built vessels until U.S.-built ships are available. HSC-2 Swift and Westpac Express enabled the Third Marine Expeditionary Force to expand training and engagement in the western Pacific while increasing training time. They are currently being used in support of tsunami relief operations in the Indian Ocean. HSC-2 Swift provides a research and development test bed and serves as an operational platform in support of contingency response requirements. Contract awards for new vessels are expected in Fiscal Year 2008 with delivery in 2010.

MV-22 Osprey. The MV-22 remains the Marine Corps' number one aviation acquisition priority. The Osprey's increased range, speed, payload, and survivability will generate transformational tactical and operational capabilities. The superior mobility of the MV-22 allows the sea-based force to bypass enemy strengths and anti-access measures, attack vulnerabilities, and contribute substantially to the operational agility necessary to establish advantages of dominant maneuver. Ospreys will replace our aging fleets of CH-46E Sea Knight and CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters beginning in Fiscal Year 2007 and provide both strategic and tactical flexibility to meet emerging threats in the Global War on Terror. Utilization rates far above peacetime rates and the physical demands of continuous operations in the harsh conditions of Iraq and Afghanistan are accelerating the deterioration of aircraft and increasing operating costs. The combination of these factors makes a timely fielding of the MV-22 necessary.

Short Take Off Vertical Landing Joint Strike Fighter (STOVL JSF). The STOVL JSF will be a single engine, stealthy, supersonic, strike-fighter capable of short take-offs and vertical landings. The aircraft was designed to replace the current F/A-18 and AV-8B with an affordable platform that optimizes Marine Corps Tactical Aircraft (TacAir) missions through improved survivability, lethal precision engagement capability, and supportable expeditionary operations. The STOVL aircraft is capable of operating from amphibious ships, aircraft carriers, and austere sites. It is designed to survive in the future battlespace because of a reduced radio frequency and infrared signature, on-board sensing and countermeasures, and agile combat maneuverability. Able to perform offensive air support, destruction of enemy air defense, armed reconnaissance, and control of aircraft and missiles missions, the Joint Strike Fighter will counter existing and emerging threat systems at extended ranges providing a highly effective, flexible, responsive capability.

H-1 (AH-1Z/UH-1Y). The current fleet of AH-1W attack helicopters and UH-1N utility helicopters continue to perform superbly in the Global War on Terror. High demand for their capabilities in a harsh environment is highlighting known deficiencies of these aging helicopters – particularly with regard to crew and passenger survivability, payload lift, power availability, endurance, range, airspeed, maneuverability, and supportability. The Department of the Navy determined that the H-1 Upgrade Program is the most cost-effective alternative for the Marine Corps’ attack and utility helicopter requirements. The H-1 Upgrade Program is a key modernization effort designed to resolve existing safety deficiencies, enhance operational effectiveness of both the AH-1W and the UH-1N, and extend the service life of both aircraft. Additionally, the commonality gained between the AH-1Z and UH-1Y (84 percent) will significantly reduce life-cycle costs and logistical footprint, while increasing the maintainability and deployability of both aircraft. In October 2003, the program entered initial low-rate production. A follow-on low-rate production is scheduled to start in February 2005, and Operational and Evaluation testing is planned to begin in July 2005. Due to aircraft attrition in operations supporting the Global War on Terror, we are pursuing funding for a ‘build - new’ strategy for additional AH-1Z and UH-1Y aircraft, in order to prevent inventory shortfalls that would be unacceptable in light of current and expected operational commitments.

Heavy Lift Replacement (HLR). The HLR will replace our aging fleet of CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters to fulfill the Marine Corps’ vertical heavy lift requirement. The

aircraft will provide required capabilities, not resident in any other platform, to insert and sustain a credible sea-based force. The HRL will transport 27,000 pounds to distances of 110 nautical miles under most environmental conditions. Its payloads will include armored combat vehicles or two armored High Mobility Multi Wheeled Vehicles per sortie. To sustain the force, the HLR will transport three independent loads tailored to individual receiving unit requirements and provide the critical logistics air connector to facilitate sea-based power projection operations. This reliable, cost-effective heavy lift capability will address critical challenges in maintainability, reliability, and affordability found in present-day operations supporting the Global War on Terror.

Vertical Unmanned Air Vehicles (VUAV). Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAV) have played a critical role in recent operations, and they are also a key element of our transformation. We are pursuing the replacement of our almost 20-year old Pioneer UAV systems – which are currently flying at almost ten times the normal peacetime rate – with the Eagle Eye tilt-rotor VUAV beginning in Fiscal Year 2009. The Eagle Eye platform is being developed by the Coast Guard, and spiral development of the program will achieve the speed, range, payload, survivability, reliability, interoperability, and supportability required by our Marines well into the future. Our intended procurement of a common Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps UAV ground control station will enhance cost efficiency and interoperability of the system.

Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle. The Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV), our priority ground program, will provide Marine surface assault elements the operational and tactical mobility to exploit fleeting opportunities in the fluid operational environment of the future. Designed to launch from amphibious ships from over the horizon, the EFV will be capable of carrying a reinforced Marine rifle squad at speeds in excess of 20 nautical miles per hour in a significant wave height of three feet. This capability will reduce the vulnerability of our naval forces to enemy threats by keeping them well out to sea while providing our surface assault forces mounted in EFVs the mobility to react to and exploit gaps in enemy defenses ashore. Once ashore, EFVs will provide Marine maneuver units with an armored personnel carrier designed to meet the threats of the future. With its high-speed land and water maneuverability, highly lethal day/night fighting ability, enhanced communications capability, advanced armor and nuclear, biological, and chemical collective protection, the EFV will significantly enhance the lethality and survivability of Marine maneuver units and provide the

Marine Air Ground Task Force and Expeditionary Strike Group with increased operational tempo across the spectrum of operations. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2010, the EFV will replace the aging Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAV) that has been in service since 1972.

Ground Indirect Fires. As events in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated – and suggest for the future – the increased range and speed of expeditionary forces and the depth of their influence landward has increased and will continue to do so. In addition, the complementary capabilities of surface- and air-delivered fires continue to be highlighted in ongoing combat operations in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The importance of both precision and volume fires is critical to the lethality and survivability of Marine forces. Precision fires assist in reducing both collateral damage and the demands on tactical logistics. Marine combat forces continue to validate the requirement for volume fires in support of maneuver warfare tactics. These fires allow maneuver forces to take advantage of maneuver warfare opportunities before precision intelligence can be developed and precision fires can be employed against fleeting targets or rapidly developing enemy defensive postures. The Marine Corps will address the need for complementary fire support capabilities through procurement of a triad of ground-based indirect fire support systems, and support for acquisition of Naval aviation and surface fire support capabilities.

The new M777A1 lightweight howitzer completed operational testing in November 2004. It will replace M198 howitzers in the Marine Corps, as well as the M198s in Army Airborne, Light Units, and Stryker Brigade Combat Teams. The howitzer can be lifted by the MV-22 and CH-53E helicopters and is paired with the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement truck in the Marine Corps for improved cross-country mobility. The M777A1, through design innovation, navigation and positioning aides, and digital fire control offers significant improvements in lethality, survivability, mobility, and durability over the M198 howitzer. Delivery to the Marine Corps of low rate initial production howitzers began in December 2004. A full rate production decision is expected in February 2005, and full operational capability in the Marine Corps is planned for Fiscal Year 2009.

The High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) fulfills a critical range and volume gap in Marine Corps fire support assets by providing 24-hour, all weather, ground-based, General Support, General Support-Reinforcing, and Reinforcing indirect precision and volume fires throughout all phases of combat operations ashore. HIMARS will be fielded to one artillery

battalion of the active component and one battalion of the Reserve component. An interim capability of one battery is planned during Fiscal Years 2005-2006. An initial operational capability is planned for Fiscal Year 2007 with a full capability expected during Fiscal Year 2008.

The Expeditionary Fire Support System (EFSS) is the third element of the triad of indirect fire support systems. It will be the principal indirect fire support system for the vertical assault element of a Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable). The EFSS is a towed 120mm mortar paired with an Internally Transported Vehicle, which permits the entire mortar/vehicle combination to be internally transported aboard MV-22 and CH-53E aircraft. EFSS-equipped units will provide the ground component of a vertical assault element with immediately responsive, organic indirect fires at ranges beyond current infantry battalion mortars. Initial operational capability is planned for Fiscal Year 2006 and full operational capability is planned for Fiscal Year 2008.

DD(X) Land Attack Destroyer. The DD(X) Land Attack Destroyer will provide both precision and volume fires to supported ground forces ashore. The planned 155 millimeter Advanced Gun System (2 per ship) will provide increased firepower range and lethality over currently available naval guns through its associated Long Range Land Attack Projectile. This combination of gun and projectile will enable target engagement up to 83 nautical miles from the ship with precision accuracy. Each ship will be designed to carry 600 long range land attack projectiles. Additionally, long-range strike options are provided through use of Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles from the ship's Peripheral Vertical Launch Systems. The DD(X) will provide Marine and joint force commanders with an immediately responsive, sustainable, lethal fire support capability at ranges in support of current and future operating concepts. Initial operational capability is planned for Fiscal Year 2013.

Initiatives. The following key initiatives will increase our flexibility and required warfighting capabilities:

USMC/US Special Operations Command Initiatives. Ongoing operations in support of the Global War on Terror highlight the interdependence in the battlespace between Marine Corps operating forces and Special Operation Forces. Initiatives directed at improving the manner in which the Marine Corps and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) operate

together fall into three broad categories: people, equipment, and training. The Marine Corps and USSOCOM continue to assess current and future personnel exchanges to enhance respective warfighting capabilities. Recently, the Marine Corps initiated formation of three Foreign Military Training Units to assist USSOCOM with this critical military cooperation mission. Compatibility of equipment is another key ingredient to our successful relationship. A number of collaborative efforts, from the Internally Transportable Vehicle to the MV-22, demonstrate the commitment to compatibility and efficiencies gained through joint acquisition. Lastly, we continue to improve our relationship through pre-deployment training, which materially contributes to battlefield success. Despite current operations tempo, our forces are making great strides.

Tactical Air Integration Initiative. Naval Tactical Aircraft (TacAir) Integration is a program that allows all Naval Strike-Fighter aircraft to meet both Services' warfighting and training requirements. Marine Fighter-Attack squadrons are deploying with carrier air wings aboard aircraft carriers, and Navy Strike-Fighter squadrons are being assigned to the Marine Corps' Unit Deployment Program for land-based deployments. Force structure reductions associated with this plan and the fielding of the Joint Strike Fighter should result in a total cost savings and cost avoidance of over \$30 billion.

TacAir Integration retains our warfighting potential and brings the Naval Services a step closer to the flexible sea based force satisfying all Global War on Terror, Global Naval Force Presence Posture, and Operation Plan requirements. A leaner, more efficient Naval fighter/attack force is possible through 'Global Sourcing' – the ability to task any Department of the Navy squadron to either Service's mission. This concept is enabled by maintaining a 'Level Readiness' posture through alignment of resources to operational and training requirements.

Experimentation. Rigorous experimentation, assessment, and analysis are the primary mechanism for fostering innovation. Experimentation is vital to provide valuable information that determines the extent that concepts and force development strategies need revision. The Marine Corps works closely with our sister Services and the Joint Forces Command in fostering the creation of new concepts, refining them in the experimentation crucible, and aligning the efforts of Combatant Commanders, Services, interagency, multi-national, and industry partners. We believe experimentation is the foundation for all new joint concept recommendations.

The Marine Corps Combat Development Command has realigned its experimentation program around the Sea Viking Campaign. The insights gathered from Sea Viking are essential in determining potential joint force capabilities required for the conduct of forcible entry operations from a sea base. Our experimentation efforts will continue as we explore new and emerging technologies to address the interface challenges of transferring personnel and equipment utilizing sea base connectors and maritime prepositioned ships. In addition, the Marine Corps continues to conduct vital experimentation with non-lethal weapons due to the nature of conflict and its proximity to non-combatants. Although lethal force is necessary to wage successful war, we have learned that it is not always appropriate for winning the peace. As we field these important new tools for operating in adverse environments where combatants and non-combatants are often intermingled, we are also assessing new options that will assist us in accomplishing our mission while minimizing unnecessary loss of life, injury, and damage to property. Research and vital experimentation continue as we evaluate new technologies to refine our capability needs.

Sea Swap. Sea Swap is a concept for gaining efficiencies in forward deployed naval forces. The concept extends ship deployment to 12 to 24 months, while rotating crews and embarked personnel on shorter periods, generally 6 months. Deployed forces increase on-station forward presence by reducing steaming time from homeport to fleet operating areas. The Marine Corps is committed to developing and testing the Sea Swap concept. While current operational tempo precludes us from dedicating a Marine Expeditionary Unit to Sea Swap experimentation in the near future, we are continuing analytical work in conjunction with the Navy to thoroughly examine the concept to identify benefits and risks. As our operational tempo normalizes, we anticipate developing a phased training approach that will experiment with elements of the concept that apply to a Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Expeditionary Strike Groups. The Navy-Marine Corps team has completed deployments of several Expeditionary Strike Groups (ESG) to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. The ESG combines the capabilities of surface combatants, a submarine, and a tethered maritime patrol aircraft with those of an Amphibious Ready Group and Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) to provide greater combat capabilities to regional combatant commanders. Current operations have precluded us from conducting further

testing to make key decisions about doctrine, organization, training, and leadership. Future proof of concept deployments will assist us in determining the way ahead for the ESG.

VI. INFRASTRUCTURE

The Marine Corps continues to make wise use of constrained resources in operating and maintaining its infrastructure. This is being accomplished by balancing new construction with demolition of inadequate or unsafe facilities, use of sustainment metrics in maintaining the structures we have, reduction in energy consumption, and use of better business practices. Long term planning is also being used to ensure our installations evolve and transition in step with our operating forces. The end state of these on-going efforts is support of combat ready Marines and their families.

Corps Better Business Practices

Marine Corps Business Enterprise. The Business Enterprise Office is charged with the mission of improving the Corps' business practices. The recently approved Business Enterprise Strategic Plan is designed to guide end-to-end assessment and improvement of Marine Corps business processes through Fiscal Year 2012. It incorporates regionalization, competition, divestiture, elimination of low-value activities and services, continuous process improvement, and investment in training our Civilian Marine workforce to facilitate transforming the Marine Corps into a performance based organization in support of the warfighter. The plan establishes a savings goal for the Program Objective Memorandum 2008 period that culminates in \$200 million annual savings across all business processes and frees 1,700 Marines for reassignment to warfighting requirements.

Regionalization of Bases and Stations. The Marine Corps is transforming its bases from singularly managed and resourced entities to ones strategically managed in geographic regions. Our goal is to position our installations to be more effective and consistent providers of support to the warfighter and will use the Marine Corps Business Enterprise and other initiatives to do so. Our regions will reach initial operational capability during Fiscal Year 2005 and full operational capability during Fiscal Year 2006.

Public Private Venture. Efforts to improve housing for Marines and their families continue. Thanks to Congressional action last year that eliminated the budgetary authority cap

on Public Private Venture investments in military family housing, the Marine Corps remains on track to meet the Strategic Planning Guidance goal to eliminate inadequate housing by 2007.

Force Structure Review Initiative Facility Requirements. Implementation of the approved force structure review initiatives includes facilities construction requirements to support rapid and significant force structure changes. New force structure that must be supported includes infantry, reconnaissance and intelligence units in the active component, and reconnaissance, anti-terrorism, and an intelligence unit in the reserves. Your support for the acquisition of facilities needed to support the standup of these units is appreciated.

Encroachment. The Marine Corps has been successful in using the land-space buffering tool Congress provided the armed services in 2003 to protect areas in proximity to military lands from incompatible development. We are participating in conservation forums with land conservators, city and county planners, and open land advocates in communities where our training ranges are located. One of the goals is to preserve open space and endangered species habitat in those areas as well as deter potential incompatible development near our installations. These projects are ongoing at most of our installations.

Last year's Defense Authorization Act also amended the Endangered Species Act to allow the Secretary of the Interior to accept Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans as suitable substitutes for critical habitat designation. The Marine Corps is using this legislation to protect and enhance populations of these species while continuing to conduct essential training.

VII. SAFETY

Effective safety programs are vital to force protection and operational readiness. Marine leaders understand the importance of leadership, education, and accountability in the effort to reduce mishaps and accidents. As a result of actions taken and programs implemented, Fiscal Year 2004 mishap fatalities were driven downward from the previous fiscal year. Operational mishap fatalities during the same period were also significantly reduced. Although Aviation mishaps trended upward during Fiscal Year 2004, Marine Aviation is working myriad initiatives to improve our aviation safety performance this fiscal year. Additionally, we saw a reduction in mishap fatalities (fatalities not resulting from enemy action) in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II from Operation IRAQI FREEDOM I. Our leadership is energized at every level. From the Executive Safety Board's leadership initiatives, to the introduction of mentorship programs at the

unit level and driver's improvement in recruit training, we are actively involved in the effort to safeguard our most precious assets – our Marines and Sailors.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me emphasize that your Marines, as shown in recent battles like Fallujah, are courageous and fully dedicated to whatever sacrifice is required to protect this Nation. Their bravery, sacrifice, and commitment to warfighting excellence have added new chapters to our Corps' rich legacy. Your Marines recognize they have an essential mission. They know that they are well equipped, well led, well trained, and have the solid backing of the American people. The Marine Corps fully understands that our greatest contribution to the Nation is our high-level of readiness – across the spectrum of conflict. With your continued support, we will ensure that your Marines, their equipment, their training, and our organization are ready for any potential contingency. Marines and their families greatly appreciate the unwavering support of Congress in achieving our high level of success.